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## THIS LOOKS GOOD

### HANDLING SWEET CLOVER SEED CROP.

The following quotation from a report by F. E. Longmire, county agent, Grundy County, Illinois, in regard to the method of harvesting sweet clover should be of great value to county agents interested in the promotion of this valuable farm crop, which is receiving increasing attention year by year:

"The largest amount of matured sweet clover seed is obtained by cutting the crop when one-half to two-thirds of the seeds are ripe. Harvesting at this stage of maturity, should be done when the morning dew is on or when the weather is damp, to reduce the loss from shattering. Just as much seed may be secured by harvesting when one-fourth to one-third of the seeds are ripe but the quality of the seed will not be so good in that it will show less plumpness and maturity. The color will be a little better than with the riper seed.

Farmers depending on the hullings or straw for seed prefer to cut the seed a little green, probably when one-fourth to one-third of the seeds are ripe. At this stage the plants are not so woody and it is not so difficult to get them through the binder and the thresher.

An ordinary grain binder is used in harvesting and the crop should be cut just as high as possible to get all the branches containing seed. Where a high stubble can be left grain saving boxes can be placed that will catch considerable of the seed that shatters, especially ripe seed. The seed, leaves, bugs, and trash that are caught in the grain saving boxes must be spread out and stirred frequently to prevent spoiling of the seed. A grain saver (galvanized box) about 14 inches wide, 9 inches deep and 4 feet long may be attached in the open space to the right of the bull wheel just below the packers. Frequently two galvanized iron sheets are bent and attached in such a manner as to direct the shattering grain to this

grain saver. One sheet is attached so as to catch the shattering grain from the rollers where the clover goes over to the binder deck. The other is attached about two or three inches below the lower edge of the binder deck to catch the shattering seed as the bundles are kicked off. This seed is also directed into the grain saving box.

Our most successful seed producers prefer to shock sweet clover in round shocks of eight bundles and a cap. The cap causes the shocks to dry out somewhat slower and prevents unnecessary shattering caused by crickets and grasshoppers. It is best to leave the sweet clover shock thru at least a week of drying weather before hulling. If cut ripe a thresher is usually necessary before putting the seed thru a huller, however, the less matured stems of clover with considerable size can be put thru the large sized huller successfully, such as the Birdsell No. 9.

After the sweet clover is harvested and fully dried out it should be threshed, as every disturbance causes shattering of seed. Put canvasses on basket racks and have the men haul medium size loads to the huller or thresher. This eliminates the waste of seed that is ordinarily kicked and beaten out by the man loading. Every hulling also reduces the amount of weathering that taints the color of the seed."

County Agent Section
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